

December 6, 2006

Press Release | Contact: Danielle Langone (202) 225-6416

WASHINGTON, DC—Representatives Peter DeFazio, Darlene Hooley and David Wu and Senator Ron Wyden, as well as seven other representatives, sent a letter today to U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez urging the Bush administration to include disaster assistance for salmon fishers in the continuing resolution for fiscal year 2007. Including this funding in a continuing resolution being drafted by the president and his allies in Congress will ensure that this disaster assistance passes Congress before it adjourns for the year.

“There is no question that salmon fishers have suffered immensely from the widespread shutdown of this year's fishing season,” DeFazio said. “It's past time for Congress to recognize that and provide assistance so that these fishers can pay their bills and put food on the table. It's vital that Secretary Gutierrez request this funding to be included in the continuing resolution, so fishers can get the help they need as soon as possible.”

“Every time I've met with folks on the coast this year I've heard heart-wrenching stories about businesses forced to close and people unable to pay their mortgage or electricity bills,” Wyden said. “This funding is vital to the survival of our fishermen and coastal communities.”

“Oregon's coastal communities have been devastated by the West Coast salmon closure,” Hooley said. “Fishers and businesses cannot wait another day for help. Therefore, we are asking Secretary Gutierrez to honor his commitment to reach out to congressional leaders to help secure emergency aid before Congress adjourns for the year. Time is of the essence -- we need the administration's help now.”

“This disaster wasn't created by fishermen, but rather by poor Klamath Basin management decisions made back in Washington, D.C.,” Wu said. “Oregon salmon fishers and their families need the Bush administration to deliver. Their livelihoods depend on it.”

The text of the letter is below.

December 6, 2006

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th and Constitution Avenues, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

We understand that the administration has made a request for a number of items to be included in the continuing resolution (CR) for fiscal year 2007 that will be considered by

Congress this week.

It is also our understanding that the administration has unfortunately failed to include in your request the \$60.4 million in disaster assistance for those impacted by the declared salmon fishing disaster off the coasts of Oregon and California.

We are concerned that the congressional leadership will not include this critical funding in the CR without a request from the administration. Therefore, it is vital that the administration request that this long overdue aid be included in the CR. The CR represents the last opportunity to provide this aid before Congress adjourns for the year. These families have already had to wait too long for the promised aid. They have had their economic livelihoods taken away through no fault of their own. They need and deserve assistance, but that assistance will not come through without your help.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/

Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator

Darlene Hooley
Member of Congress

David Wu
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

George Miller
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress

Tom Lantos
Member of Congress

Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress